

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services in Sierra Leone

The Network for Gender and Nutrition Strengthening in Extension Minutes and Recap Report

Njala University Extension Day INGENAES December Network Members Meeting

December 3, 2017 at Njala University

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Agriculture Extension Day at Njala University, December 3rd, 2016

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Introduction

The USAID-funded INGENAES project in Sierra Leone is led by University of Illinois with Njala University and local partners, growing on an over 50 year-long partnership. As a central engagement, the project has launched a network of extension providers from the public, NGO, and private sector. Collaborative efforts improved nutrition in the country through strengthened extension, empowering women farmers and engaging men farmers. INGENAES has also established a growing partnership with WorldFish to support the Feed the Future Scaling up Aquaculture Production Project in the Tonkolili District.

Recap of the Njala University Extension Day

Njala University hosted an extension showcase and learning day for regional farmer groups, Njala students, faculty, staff, and network members. The activities and event were supported by the USAID-funded INGENAES project. The event was held on December 3, 2016 to align with the Network Member's Meeting on the same day. Highlights from the day included:

- Attendance of approximately 100 farmers, 5 Farmer Based Organizations, and farmer groups
- Farmer showcasing with products and technologies for share as well as items for purchase
- Official recognition of the event by the Njala University administration on behalf of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Prof. Alpha Lakoh
- Remarks by Department Head, Mr. Adolphus Johnson, Network Honorary Chairperson, Mr. Leslie Scott, and other faculty from the NU Department of Extension and Rural Sociology
- Various speakers and NU administration stressed that although the extension events with local farmers had been suspended during the Ebola outbreak, they were encouraged that that the 2016 Extension Day would promote the revitalization of the activities
- Highlights in the showcase included local chicken and egg production, livestock, horticultural production, and a special demonstration and learning activity by the Department of Consumer and Home Economics on Nutritious Recipes
- Farmer groups participated in afternoon field learning activities, working different stations throughout the campus and field research plots

Photos from the NU Extension Day:



December Network for Gender and Nutrition Strengthening Members Meeting Minutes

1. Opening by the Network's Honorary Chairman, Mr. Leslie Scott
 - a. Stressed the importance of regaining momentum of the Network as a dynamic and vibrant member-focused and impact driven community of practice
 - b. The Network membership is diverse and represents the different districts with regional focus in the North and the South
 - c. Concentrating on improving a system for sharing and coordination
2. Mr. Adolphus Johnson, Head Coordinator of the Network, gives updates
 - a. Regional sub-meetings in Makeni and Bo for September/October were well attended and focused on addressing expectations, concerns, and feedback from members since the August launch
 - b. The Illinois/Njala INGENAES team has recently participated in presentations, activities, and events with WorldFish, FAO, CRS, USAID, MOHS, MAFFS, and other partners
 - c. The NU Department of Extension is progressing forward with outreach and research projects involving students, faculty, and regional farmers in demonstrations and learning activities to better encourage gender and nutrition sensitive production systems, technologies, and extension approaches. It was recommended to improve linkages between these activities with MAFFS. Examples include a poultry production workshop, pigeon pea research plots, and demonstrations with FBOs and ABCs.
 - d. Although for the most part the COP e-platform has been a good tool for communication and peer technical support, it was stressed to only use the WhatsApp group for relevant issues and topics
3. James Blackie, USAID Project Management Specialist for Agricultural and Economic Growth, recognized the work of INGENAES and the Network
 - a. Overview of the Feed the Future Initiative and the structure of USAID in Sierra Leone
 - b. The important role that the University of Illinois and Njala University partnership plays in the agriculture and food security objectives
 - c. Made two recommendations that Njala should better communicate events in advance in order to give USAID the opportunity to cover them via the press and communications team. Additionally, Mr. Blackie would like for communications to be more specific to INGENAES work in Sierra Leone rather than internationally.
4. Network Member Updates
 - a. Regionally members have introduced INGENAES to communities and farmer beneficiaries.
 - b. Coordination should still be improved between member organizations and regional institutions.
 - i. MAFFS district branches could host regional meetings
 - ii. In the North, University of Makeni and MAFFS in Bombali can strengthen work together to better support the Network
 - iii. Issues were presented about coordination being difficult and lack of trust when working with the District Council

- c. Plans were made to create regionally focused WhatsApp groups to better concentrate coordination efforts
 - d. Ms. Fatmata Binta Jalloh was introduced as a key staff person for the Northern region to help in these efforts
5. Committee Formation
- a. 4 member committees were proposed in order to improve coordination and address concerns
 - i. Steering Committee
 - ii. Fundraising and Proposal Writing Committee
 - iii. Program Advising Committee (technical backstopping and support)
 - iv. Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
 - b. Formation of the committees to occur at the regional or district level to report back to a central steering committee
 - c. Limit to 5 to 7 members per committee
6. Next Steps led by Mr. Johnson
- a. The INGENAES gender and nutrition technology assessments were discussed led by Mr. Colby Silvert, and members were promised a memo about the workshop January 17th and 18th
 - b. Cross exchange visits to be planned between organizations to see field examples of gender and nutrition integration within extension work.
 - c. National Learning Symposium in 2017
 - d. See upcoming activities in this report for more info on events in the near future
7. Closing and Vote of Thanks by Mr. Scott

Photos from INGENAES Network Member Meeting



Upcoming Activities

- **December 2016:** Regional committee formation and meetings.
- **January 2-5 2017:** Identify students from NU and work with INGENAES to train the students on using the technology assessment tool. This will act as a capstone project. The in-country assessment will commence with a student workshop with trainings in January, 2017.
- **January 6-12 2017:** The field assessment activities will likely be in Tonkolili with WorldFish, focusing on fish feed production and distribution and in Moyamba with NU, and assessing rice processing by Agricultural Business Centers. The field activities will support INGENAES in the process of training and conducting key informant interviews (KIIs) with technology disseminators and extension agents by providing organization.
- **January 17-18 2017:** Facilitate a two-day workshop, “Addressing Gender Issues in Agricultural Technology Design, Use, and Dissemination” at Njala University. This will be aimed toward developing the capacities of Network members to better understand the role of agricultural technologies in advancing gender equality, and to implement gender strengthening strategies for technology design and dissemination. Network member meeting will be included in one of the workshop days.